

13-year-old “Elaina”

At age four, “Elaina” remembers wandering the streets of her hometown on her own. Her parents were using drugs and severely neglecting her. She has just a few fuzzy memories of that time: “I know that the refrigerator was green,” she says, “but it didn’t matter, because there was never anything in it.”

To make matters worse, her mom got in a car accident when Elaina was five or six. Her mom was never the same again.

Elaina remembers her mom reaching towards her when she woke up in the hospital. “Call grandma and get me my heroine,” were her first words to her little girl.

Elaina was removed from her home and placed with her grandma and uncle who also used drugs. Tragically, Elaina’s grandma died soon after that placement. Elaina was then placed with her other grandmother. This grandmother adopted Elaina, but almost unbelievably, she soon passed away as well.

Elaina then moved in with her grandpa and an aunt and uncle. By this time she was in 6th grade. She says she would often cry alone in her bed, but no one would come to comfort her. She knew they could hear her through the thin walls, but they didn’t come. She felt like no one in the world cared about her. She had lived in eight different homes with eight different families in her 12 short years.

Last summer, Elaina moved in with another aunt and uncle who have a few young children of their own. Intermountain is working hard to make sure this will be Elaina’s forever family. Elaina is convinced that her aunt and uncle will either reject her at some point or pass away unexpectedly, and it’s easy to see why she feels that way. At one point, Elaina was so uncontrollable she had to spend time in a psychiatric hospital. She was terrified to be there because, she says, her sister had gone to that facility before, and she never saw her again.

She’s back at home now and in therapy at Intermountain. She has a love-hate relationship with her therapist in that she both loves and hates how he’s able to see through the walls she’s built around herself and help her be emotionally vulnerable. There’s been progress at home as well. “She’s to the point where she’s wishing she’d been born to this family in the first place,” her therapist says, “and that’s a huge step forward.”

Thank you for supporting Intermountain. For more information or to find out how you can help children like Elaina, call 406-457-4804.



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